



Unit 3: Buddhism

3.1 Origins of Buddhism



Origins of Buddhism

- Founded approximately 2500 yrs ago in India
- The man who was to become Buddha (Siddhartha Guatama) was born around 653 BCE into a family in the Kshatriya caste

Origins of Buddhism

○ Present- Day Nepal





Origins of Buddhism

- The story of Buddah's life varies from one Buddhist tradition to the other

The Early Life of Buddha

The Four Sights

- Siddhartha craved spiritual satisfaction
- Fearing that Siddhartha would leave home for a religious life, his father arranged for the streets to be filled with health and happy people

The Early Life of Buddha

The Four Sights

- Siddhartha at the age of 29, left the palace without his father knowing with his charioteer and experienced what Buddhism refers to as the *Four Sights*

The Early Life of Buddha

Sight #1

- Old person, broken body



The Early Life of Buddha

Sight #2

- Sick man lying by the roadside



The Early Life of Buddha

Sight #3

- Corpse being prepared for cremation



The Early Life of Buddha

Sight #4

○ Homeless monk



Renunciation and Austerities

- Siddhartha became a wandering seeker of spiritual knowledge
- His first teacher taught him how to



Renunciation and Austerities

- The experience was good but did not produce the permanent solution, problems still existed
- Siddhartha then tried controlled breathing



Renunciation and Austerities

- This only produced headaches
- Next he tried reducing his food intake



Renunciation and Austerities

- He became ill and gave up this self-denial
- He came to the conclusion that the best course was the Middle Way or a path between both extremes
- Siddhartha concluded that the best lifestyle was one of moderation

Enlightenment

- Siddhartha began to take food and meditate again
- He sat under a tree and in a state of higher consciousness
- He saw the death and rebirth of all types of beings as a consequence of their good and bad deeds

Enlightenment

- Good deeds brought a better life, bad deeds brought unpleasantness
- In realizing this, he removed craving and ignorance for himself
- In that moment he achieved Nirvana, a state of supreme realization and enlightenment

Enlightenment

- Enlightenment is an understanding of the truth of life and the freedom from ignorance
- He had attained perfect wisdom and absolute peace
- This released him from the cycle of endless births

Enlightenment

- Siddhartha stayed in this state for 49 days
- He was pondering his future and deciding to publicize his teachings and ideas of *dharma*
- *Dharma* the teachings and his ideas of truth concerning the “laws” of the universe

The First Sermon

- Siddhartha came to be known as “Buddha
- Buddha means “The Enlightened One” or “One Who Has Awakened
- He shared his new understanding of life with five Hindu ascetics who accepted his insights and became bhikkhus (Buddha’s monks)

The First Sermon

- Teachings spread quickly
- After 5 years an order of monks was established called sangha
- An order of nuns called bhikkhuni sangha was also established

Parinirvana (release from the cycle of rebirth)

- Buddha never considered himself the leader of Buddhism
- On his death bed he said he thought that people should decide, for him/herself, which teachings to follow
- Ultimately each person is responsible for his/her own salvation

Buddhism's Hindu Origins

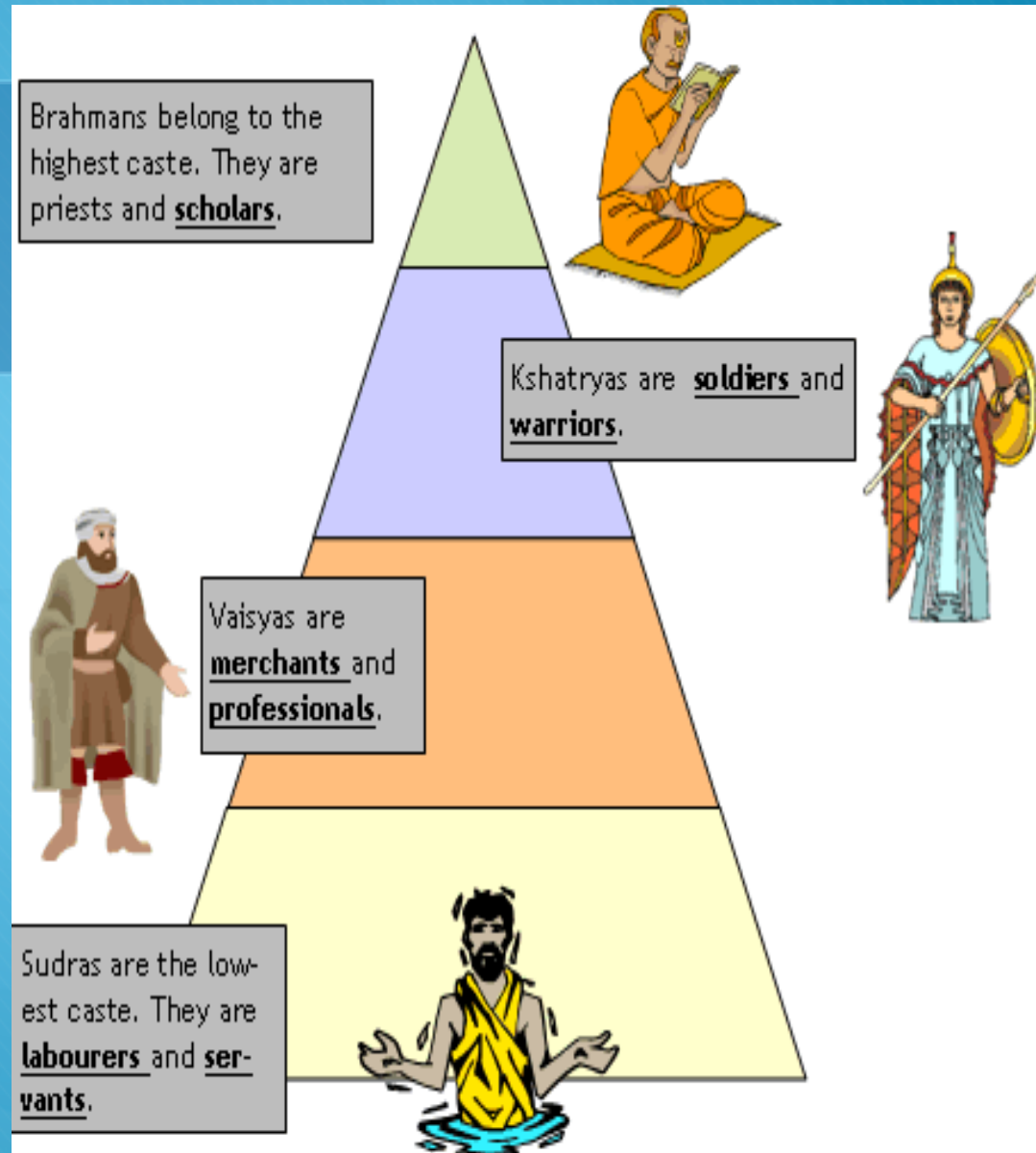
- Buddha was born into the Kshatriya caste, therefore he was born a Hindu
- The religion grew out of Hinduism; keeping such elements of reincarnation, samsara, karma, and dharma
- Buddha also rejected some aspects of Hinduism

Buddhism's Hindu Origins

Rejections #1

Particularly the power of the Brahmin caste

Contrary to the Buddhist notion of equality of all individuals



Buddhism's Hindu Origins

Rejections #2

Hindu rituals of offerings to gods, chants, and sacrifices.

Buddha was determined to keep Buddhism free of meaningless rituals



Buddhism's Hindu Origins

Rejections #3

He considered questions and theories about the creation and eternity of the world futile

Buddha believed that these questions could not be answered and that it was pointless to try

Buddhism's Hindu Origins

Rejections #4

He disapproved of the language of Hinduism.

The Brahmins used the language of Sanskrit, which few spoke and understood

This left Hinduism under the control of the priests

Buddhism's Hindu Origins

Rejections #4 cont'd

Buddha gave all his talks in Pali, the language common to all people of his religion

This made Buddhism accessible to all

Buddhism's Hindu Origins

Rejections #5

Disagreed with the Hindu notion that an individual can achieve Nirvana (moksha) only through thousands of lifetimes and upon reaching the Brahmin caste.

Buddhism's Hindu Origins

Rejections #5 (cont'd)

He believed that made
Nirvana (moksha)
impossible for most
Hindus

Buddhism preaches that
through self effort,
enlightenment could be
achieved in one lifetime